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BOOK NOTICES.

Mehmed's Brautfahrt (Smailagic Mehmed): Ein Volksepos der süd-slavischen Mohammedaner. Aufgezeichnet von Dr. Friedrich S. Krauss. Deutsch von Carl Gröber. Wien, Alfred Hölder, 1890. 16 mo., 130.

This is a German metrical translation by Captain Gröber, an officer in the Austrian army, of a epic poem of the Mohammedan Slavs of Herzegovina, taken down from oral recitation by Dr. Krauss, the distinguished South-slav specialist. Among the secluded valleys of the upper Balkan peninsula—as in the remote districts of Ireland and Scotland—there are still old men, the descendants of the bards and minnesingers of the middle ages, who keep alive the memory of the past by the recital of long heroic poems which have been handed down traditionally through centuries. Among the Slavs these poems are all in a monotonous decasyllabic meter, without rhyme, and the singer accompanies himself on a sort of guitar (*gusla*), whence the generic name Guslar songs (*Guslarenlieder*) applied to the compositions. They are frequently of great length—this particular one occupied six hours in the delivery—and end with a few comic verses having no connection with the subject of the poem itself and intended to put the hearers in a good humor. A wealth of such material exists in the peninsula. The old man from whom this was obtained claimed to know a hundred and fifty such poems.

Unlike most of its class, the story is told from the standpoint of the proselyted Slavs, who appear to have become as intensely Mohammedan as any of their Moslem conquerors. By careful research the translator has ascertained that the poem has for its historic groundwork an engagement between the Turks and Christians which occurred in 1657, at no great distance from Budapest, the capital of Hungary, which at that time was all in the hands of the Turks. Briefly told, the story is as follows: Mehmed, a young officer, is on his way, accompanied by a single attendant, to receive his commission from the Pasha of Budapest. They meet a party of soldiers in charge of a Mohammedan girl who has refused the hand of the Pasha, and is now by his orders to be sold as a slave to a general

of the hated Christians in Wallachia. Mehmed determines upon her rescue, and the two men fall upon the hundred soldiers and slaughter them in good old knightly style, secure the maiden, and return with her to her home in Budapest. She of course falls in love with her deliverer and agrees to marry him, when Mehmed compels the unwilling minion of the Pasha to draw up the marriage contract, and then sets out for the south to collect his friends to escort the bride in proper fashion to her new home. They return to the number of twelve thousand footmen and fifteen thousand mounted warriors and are received in Budapest with princely hospitality. The festivities last several days, when young Mehmed and his train start on the return home with his bride. In the meantime, however, the false Pasha has sent a letter to the Wallachian general advising him to assemble his forces and cut off the party. Mehmed advances to the bridge of the Klina, where he encounters the whole host of the Wallachians, who have already engaged his advance guard. A terrible battle ensues, lasting three days, with the result that the Christian army is cut to pieces and its general becomes a prisoner in the hands of his youthful rival.

The story is well told and gives a vivid picture of a period in the long struggle between Turk and Christian, still going on in the same region, when every man's trade was war, and life was a carnival of blood, rapine, and drunkenness.

JAMES MOONEY.

“*Essai d'une classification des races humaines, basée uniquement sur les caractères physiques. Par M. J. Deniker.*”—[*Bull. Soc. d'Anthrop. de Paris*, xii, 1889, 320-336.]

The classification of mankind by race has not always proceeded upon the characteristics which truly constitute race. A familiar example is presented in the term Bantu for Africa and Algonkin for America. Every one knows that in the present state of ethnology these are linguistic words. Race, on the contrary, means blood. To our thinking, whenever and wherever a group of human beings have been isolated long enough to render a set of physical characters peculiar to themselves fixed and hereditary, then and there you have a race of men. In the modern commingling of our species incident to commerce a pure race is no longer possible; but many believe that it was not always thus. Between the pristine group and